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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

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AGRICULTURE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

July 22, 2016

Mr. David Engel  
1246 Viewmont Drive  
Niskayuna, NY 12309

Dear Mr. Engel,

Thank you for attending the meeting on Friday, July 8 at Hoosick Falls High School. The people of Hoosick Falls, Hoosick and Petersburg are living through a crisis now that no one, anywhere in our state, should have to endure. I want you to know that I am doing everything I can — I am using every power I have as your Senator — to get you the answers you want and the help that is needed.

In your note to me, you asked two important questions, and I am sure many of your clients are wondering the same thing: What federal actions had I taken on the federal level in response to PFOA, and what can be done about Superfund status in Hoosick?

My office has also been in contact with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for regular updates on the status of the federal response to the environmental crisis in Hoosick Falls and the surrounding areas. On February 1, 2016, I urged the EPA to expedite the environmental clean-up of Hoosick Falls by designating it as a federal Superfund site. The EPA is conducting an ongoing investigation into the environmental contamination and is expected to make a decision on whether to propose the site for listing as a federal Superfund site this fall.

As a member of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I requested that the Committee hold a hearing to examine the effects of PFOA on drinking water so that the federal government can effectively address this problem in communities across the United States. I have also requested that the EPA review PFOA so that it can be analyzed under the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA). We need to hold hearings at both the state and federal level, so that we have as many people as possible paying attention to this crisis. In the State of New York, in the year 2016, we should be able to drink our water without having to worry about whether it's safe.

We still do not know enough about how PFOA exposure affects our bodies. Right now, the CDC (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has not yet determined what specific level of PFOA in a person's blood might result in adverse health effects. Several studies have found probable links between PFOA exposure and certain diseases, including high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis (ulcers in the colon), thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, and pregnancy-induced hypertension, and other studies have found that PFOA might affect the liver and the immune system. But we need more specific, definitive answers than that.

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The CDC and the NIH (the National Institutes of Health) still need to conduct more research on PFOA exposure, so they can tell us precisely what level of PFOA in blood might result in adverse health effects, and exactly what those adverse health effects are. I have asked the CDC and NIH to prioritize this research and tell me what they need in order to fill in the gaps in our current understanding of the health effects of PFOA. Whatever the CDC and NIH need in order to do this research - whether it is funding or legislative authority - I will not stop fighting in the U.S. Senate until they get it.

The residents of Hoosick Falls, Hoosick, Petersburg and the surrounding areas deserve to know what happened, when it happened and why, so that we can solve this problem effectively and make sure it never happens again. I will fight to ensure that every available resource is being used to fully investigate the sources of the PFOA contamination, and that aggressive steps are being taken to identify the responsible parties and hold them accountable.

The PFOA contamination that has occurred in Upstate New York is nothing short of a tragedy, and I know this has been an awful period for so many of my constituents there. The residents of Hoosick Falls, Hoosick, Petersburg, and every other community in New York should be able to drink their water without having to worry about whether it is going to harm their families.

Thank you again for writing to me. I hope you will keep in touch if there is anything I can do to assist you please do not hesitate to reach out to David Connors, in my Capital Region office, at 518-431-0120.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

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